

NSC BRIEFING

DOCUMENT NO. [REDACTED]  
NO CHANGE IN [REDACTED]  
CLASSIFIED BY [REDACTED]  
NEXT REVIEW DATE [REDACTED]  
AUTH: HR 70-2  
DATE: [REDACTED] REVIEWER: 372044  
NICARAGUA

16 June 1959

- I. Collapse of rebellion temporarily bolsters Somoza regime, but threats to government, both external and internal, will continue.
  - A. Rebel leaders captured on 13 June, ending "invasion effort" begun 31 May. About 20 rebels still wandering aimlessly in hills, and their capture expected soon.
    1. Very little bloodshed, due restraint Nicaraguan forces. Rebel leaders, mostly from prominent, wealthy families, can expect prison terms, not firing squads.
    2. Business leaders appear chastened after failure their strike first week of June.
  - B. Exiles reported plotting new invasions and may receive support from Venezuela and Cuba. Failure of recent rebellion, led by moderates, may lead opposition to accept Communist support.
    1. We have reports from [REDACTED] that arms and men from Venezuela arriving on Cuban Isle of Pines for transfer to Nicaragua.
    2. There is some Cuban army buildup on Isle of Pines possibly to support action against Nicaragua (or the Dominican Republic), but more likely in response to rumors of counterrevolutionary plotting against Cuba.
- C. [REDACTED] told US Ambassador in San Jose 10 June that Castro had, in fact, promised aid to Nicaraguan revolt and that "all is lost to Communist in Nicaragua" unless Somoza brothers leave now.

1. Soviet lecturer in Moscow on 17 May said "among ourselves," Raul Castro is a Communist.
2. Nicaraguan exiles in Cuba, Venezuela and some in other places are Communist-led.
3. We have reports that Nicaraguan exiles in El Salvador and Guatemala moving to Honduras for new invasion effort.

II. Over the long run, Somoza regime is bucking climate of opinion in Caribbean area that its days are numbered--that it is dictatorship and all dictators on way out.

A. This line, nurtured by persons like Figueres and Betancourt as well as by Communists, probably in part responsible for decided coolness to Nicaraguan position in OAS.

1. OAS finally sent investigating team to area 15 June two weeks after Nicaraguans asked for help.

B. In fact, President Luis Somoza, who succeeded his father in 1956 and was subsequently elected in own right, has tried to liberalize his regime.

1. Until 30 May, when civil rights were suspended in anticipation of revolt, there was complete freedom of press and assembly.
2. Businessmen's hostility to regime due largely to current economic downturn and to government's tax program which favored lower classes.
3. Somoza has promised free election at end of his term in 1963 and that his successor will not be family member; in effort counteract opposition line that "Somoza dynasty" will continue after 1963 under General Anastasio Somoza,

president's brother and military chief.

4. Whatever Somoza does, however, he still handicapped by Somoza name--a symbol of dictatorship--and by wide resentment over tremendous wealth built up by family over past 25 years.